

Study: HPV vaccine legislation not linked to increase in risky sexual activity

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Melissa Jenco, News Content Editor

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Lawmakers' concerns that encouraging HPV vaccination also could encourage risky sexual activity are unfounded, according to a new study.

Teens in states with HPV legislation reported recent sexual intercourse and condom use at about the same rates as those in states without such legislation, researchers found.

The Academy and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention **recommend HPV vaccine**, which protects against several types of cancer, as part of routine immunization for males and females at age 11 or 12 years. It can be started as early as 9 years. In 2016, about half of girls and 37.5% of boys were up to date on HPV vaccination.

Twenty-three states and Washington, D.C., have enacted legislation to help improve those rates by calling for more education, helping to defray costs or mandating vaccination, according to the study "Legislation to increase uptake of HPV vaccination and adolescent sexual behavior" (Cook EE, et al. *Pediatrics*. Aug. 13, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-0458>).

However, lawmakers in some states have expressed concerns that such laws may prompt more teens to have sex or skip condom use.

To test these theories, researchers analyzed data on about 887,000 high school students from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System from 2001-'15.

About 33% had sexual intercourse in the past three months, and nearly 61% used a condom during their last sexual intercourse, according to weighted estimates.

Legislation in the study was enacted during or after 2007. After that year, 33% of teens in states without HPV legislation had sexual intercourse recently compared to 32.7% of teens in states with HPV legislation. Both were down from 35.2% and 33.7%, respectively, before 2007.

After 2007, 60% of teens in states without legislation used a condom during their last sexual intercourse compared to 59.8% in states with legislation. Condom use decreased slightly for both, which were at 63% and 62.8%, respectively, prior to 2007.

"Ensuring that adolescents receive the HPV vaccination before their first sexual experience is important to helping prevent the negative health effects of HPV infections," authors wrote. "Policies to educate adolescents and their families about the benefits of vaccination and increase access will likely be an important part of the policy response to improve vaccination rates."

Resources

- [AAP HPV Champion Toolkit](#)
- [HPV vaccine resources for health care professionals](#)
- [PediaLink continuing medical education courses \(free\): Adolescent Immunizations: Strongly Recommending the HPV Vaccine and Adolescent Immunizations: Office Strategies](#)
- [Information for parents about HPV](#)

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